

II. Drawings

Responsive to the objection to the drawings under 37 CFR 1.83(a) that “the detachable half shaft assembly being detached from the shaft bell” be shown, Applicants have proposed an amendment to the drawings. For clarification purposes, the dashed line underlying the shaft bell 14 has been amended to a solid line to more clearly distinguish between the detachable half shaft assembly 12 and the shaft bell 14. Further, the line marking the attachment of the shaft bell 14 to the detachable body 20, at the inboard end 23 defining an inboard interface 30, has been thickened to more clearly show that the shaft bell 14 and the detachable body 20 are separate elements. As amended, the drawing shows that the detachable half shaft assembly and the shaft bell are not integral elements, but rather separate components analogous to the relationship between the detachable half shaft assembly 12 and the disc rotor 16.

Accordingly, reconsideration and a withdrawal of the objections are respectfully requested.

IV. Remarks

Claims 1-4 and 9-11 stand rejected. Claims 1-4 are being cancelled. After entering this amendment, claims 9-11 remain pending.

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C § 112

Responsive to the rejections of claims 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, Applicants have proposed an amendment to the drawings for clarification purposes to more clearly show that the shaft bell 14 and the detachable half shaft assembly 12 are not integral elements. Further, it is well known in the art that the shaft bell is connected to the front or rear axle of the vehicle and provides support to the whole assembly. By the drawings, it is illustrated that shaft bell 14 engages detachable body 20 (at inboard interface 30) to which disc rotor 16 connects (at outboard interface 33). Moreover, the specification clearly mentions that the detachable half shaft assembly 12 is detachable from the shaft bell 14 or the disc rotor 16. "The detachable half shaft assembly 12 is detached from the shaft bell 14 or the disc rotor 16." Specification, paragraph [0018] (emphasis added); see also claim 9 as filed. Therefore, it is shown that analogous to disc rotor 16, shaft bell 14 is a distinct element from the detachable half shaft assembly 12.

Thus, claims 9-11 are in a condition for allowance and such action is earnestly solicited.

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C § 102(b)

Responsive to the rejections of claims 9-11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,158,124 to Austin ("*Austin*"), *Austin* fails to teach each and every element of the subject matter as claimed in claim 9 of the present application. A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. For example, claim 9 recites a preloaded bearing assembly comprising an outer race, an inboard inner race with an inboard inner surface, and "an outboard inner race disposed adjacent the outboard end of the detachable body, the outboard inner race having a first raceway formed thereon and configured to cooperate with the outboard outer raceway of the outer race to house bearings, the outboard inner race having an outboard inner surface, the bearing receiving portion radially receiving inboard and outboard inner surfaces."

Contrarily, *Austin* discloses a bearing assembly "preloaded between the inner race member 58 and inner hub 14." See *Austin* at col. 3, lines 15-20 and Figs. 1, 3 and 4. Thus, the bearing assembly in *Austin* is preloaded between inboard inner race 58 and *detachable body* 14, whereas the bearing assembly as recited in claim 9 is preloaded between an inboard inner race 42 and an *outboard inner race* 41.

Further, the outboard inner race 41 of the preloaded bearing assembly of the claimed invention is "disposed radially *between* the outer race 40 and the detachable body 20" and "configured to cooperate with the outboard outer raceway 48 of the outer race 40 to house bearings 50." Specification, paragraph [0016] (emphasis added); see also claim 9 as filed. Conversely, in *Austin*, there is no element disposed *between* the outer race 32 and the detachable body 14 "configured to cooperate with the outboard outer raceway of the outer race to house bearings."

Therefore, in *Austin*, the *detachable body 14*, rather than an *outboard inner race*, is configured to "cooperate with the outboard outer raceway of the outer race to house bearings."

Applicants respectfully submit that *Austin* does not teach a detachable half shaft assembly comprising a preloaded bearing assembly with an inboard inner race and an *outboard inner race*, the bearing receiving portion radially receiving inboard and *outboard* inner surfaces.

Accordingly, reconsideration of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) and the allowance of claim 9 are respectfully requested. Further, since claims 10-11 generally depend from claim 9, the reasons for allowance of claim 9 apply as well to the dependent claims.


Conclusion

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present form of the claims are patentably distinguishable over the art of record and that this application is now in condition for allowance. Such action is respectfully requested.

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Date

Respectfully submitted,



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